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FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES

All-Night Grad/After-Prom Events 2006



Fire Prevention Division

Inspections Branch

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Questions regarding All-Night Grad / After-Prom Events may be
directed to: (703) 246-7579

FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ALL-NIGHT GRAD / AFTER-PROM EVENTS

The following fire safety guidelines have been compiled to assist organizers in planning and safely implementing an all-night grad/after-prom event, while meeting the intent of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Our common goal and all of your efforts should result in a **SAFE, FUN and SUCCESSFUL** all-night grad/after-prom event for the class of 2006.

Permits

Required permits shall be in accordance with section 108 of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Permits are required for the operation of a public assembly and for erecting tents in excess of 900 square feet or canopies in excess of 700 square feet.

Tents and canopies exceeding the square footage outlined above shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit and approval from the Fire Marshal. Permits for tents and canopies may be obtained by making application with the Office of the Fire Marshal.

Requests for permits shall be made in writing by the person in charge of the event (Committee Chairperson). This can be done by completing and submitting the special Fire Prevention Code Permit application for All-night Grad/After prom events. Upon approval, the required permit(s) will be issued at the time of the facility and site inspection on the day of the event.

The approval process is outlined here for your convenience:

The submittal of a written emergency plan and a facility layout (floor plan) is required. One copy of this written plan and facility layout shall be submitted **at least 30 days prior** to the event for approval by the event inspector. Each submittal shall be accompanied with a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.

The written emergency plan shall include:

- Complete contact information for the event committee chairperson and all alternate contacts in case that person can not be reached. Including cell phone number and e-mail address.
- The date and time of the event, name of the school having or sponsoring the event, the name and address of the event facility and the approximate completion time for set-up on the day of the event.
- The approximate number of attendees and parents/facility staff.
- Evacuation and accountability procedures for all attendees in the event of an emergency.
- Procedure for reporting a fire or other emergency.
- Means of communication available to summon help if needed.

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The facility layout (floor plan) shall include:

- Locations of ALL exits (clearly marked).
- Locations of corridors, pathways and aisles leading to ALL exits (clearly marked).
- Primary and secondary evacuation routes (clearly distinguishable).
- Evacuation staging area(s) (clearly marked).
- All planned activity areas (brief description).
- Location of warming trays or sterno warming trays.
- Location of significant decorative displays.
- Location(s) of portable power equipment (such as a generator).

Key points to consider when formulating your written emergency plan:

- Ensure that all adult attendants of the event are trained in the duties to be performed in case of fire, panic or other emergency, including the operation of portable fire extinguishers, sounding or activating the fire alarm, calling 911, and evacuation of attendees.
- Emergency procedures and evacuation plans should be reviewed and discussed with all facility and event staff to identify the procedures and actions to be taken in the case of fire, power outages or other emergencies requiring immediate action.
- A minimum of one adult shall supervise each activity area and shall perform appropriate duties in case of fire, panic or other emergency while the event is in progress. The attendant shall have a working flashlight.

Facility and site inspections will be conducted the day of the event by an inspector from the Office of the Fire Marshal. All required permits will be issued upon completion of the inspection.

These inspections are **automatically scheduled** upon approval of the facility layout & emergency plan.

Fire Department Access

- Emergency vehicle access to the building or event facility shall be maintained at all times. If the facility has designated and approved fire lanes, it is unlawful to park or obstruct such designated areas. Consider this when planning for parking and advise all attendees to observe fire lane regulations to avoid getting a ticket and/or having a vehicle towed.
- Parking is prohibited within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.

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Fire Protection Equipment

- Fire protection system equipment and warning devices such as fire alarm panel(s), fire sprinkler heads, fire department hose connections, pull stations, audible and visual alarm devices (horns and strobes), and fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed from view or operation by any decorative material, displays or storage.

Exits and Evacuation Routes

- No decorations or other objects shall be placed to obstruct exits.
- Required exits shall be continuously maintained free from obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency.
- Egress doors shall be readily open able from the egress side without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.
- Locked or chained exit doors are prohibited.
- Exits and exit corridors are to remain free of obstructions, combustible mats, tables and chairs, displays, storage and/or persons, and shall be accessible at all times.
- All exit signs shall be illuminated and visible. Emergency lighting shall be operational.

Electrical Safety

- All light strings, lighting decorations, and electrical appliances shall be used according to manufacturer's instructions and shall be listed by a recognized testing laboratory such as UL or FM.
- Listed lighting decorations may be used as long as contact is not made with any combustible material.
- Lights with loose sockets, frayed or bare wires, and lights that produce excessive heat or other dangerous conditions shall be prohibited.
- Extension cords must be of the heavy duty TYPE, shall not be plugged together to make longer cords, and shall not overloaded.
- Extension cords with excessive physical damage and/or frayed or bare wires shall be prohibited.
- Extension cords shall NOT be extended through walls or ceilings, or under floor coverings. Extension cords shall be secured to reduce tripping hazards (tape cords to floors).

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Decorations and Decorative Materials

- Decorative materials shall either be inherently flame retardant or treated with an appropriate flame retardant product. (form attached)
- Documentation of flame retardance from the manufacturer or documentation of treatment shall be available at the time of inspection (form attached)
- A sample of each material shall be available at the time of inspection to assess the effectiveness of any treatment.
- Artificial decorative vegetation shall be flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Cornstalks, hay bales, stacks of newspapers or like materials are prohibited.
- No decorations shall be hung from any fire protection devices (sprinkler heads, emergency lighting, and fire alarming equipment).

Open Flames and Smoking

- Open flame devices such as candles and lanterns **shall be prohibited inside the building.**
- Self-contained open flame devices may be used outside of the building with approval.
- Smoking shall only be permitted in approved areas.

Special Effects

- Vapor or smoke producing effects, such as smoke machines and dry ice are not permitted due to the possibility of fire alarm activation, obscuring of exits and exit signs, and the possibility of increased panic in an emergency.
- In the event of fire alarm activation or any emergency, a plan shall be in place to immediately stop ANY MUSIC and all audio-visual special effects and the lights shall be turn on.

Cooking Safety

Outdoor grilling shall be located 15 feet away from building and away from any exit, and a fire extinguisher shall be provided. Propane cylinders shall have a current test date stamped on protective collar. (within 12 years)